

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Based on the findings of the observations and video recordings conducted of the six consecutive lessons at each of the two schools, the following features of the lessons will be analysed and discussed - Set Induction, Teaching Aids, Learner-centred and Teacher-centred tasks, Types of Questions and Teacher Personality. These aspects have been focussed upon in this limited study since they appear to have a substantial bearing on the success of the lessons and the learning process among the students. Several other essential issues have contributed successfully to the lesson structure but, they have not been included in this study due to their less significant roles in the teaching of *Julius Caesar*.

#### **4.2 TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES EMPLOYED**

##### **4.2.1 SET INDUCTION**

Set induction may be regarded as a teaching strategy introduced at the beginning of a classroom lesson primarily to focus the minds of the students on a particular item or concept which may be relevant to the lesson proper. This strategy which also enhances cognitive development, distinctly appears to be featured prominently in some of the lessons, since the more experienced teachers are rather particular about the use of this aspect to stimulate positive responses from the students. This aspect has received considerable emphasis especially among most teachers who have undergone some degree

of formal training in Pedagogy and Teaching Methodology at the various Teachers' Training Colleges or the Faculties of Education at the local universities.

For the purpose of maintaining the anonymity of the teachers and the schools, I shall refer to Assunta Secondary School and Petaling Gardens Girls' Secondary School as - School A and School B and the teachers from both the schools as Teacher A and Teacher B respectively, for the purpose of convenient reference.

To begin the analysis, Teacher A of School A has distinctly utilised "Set Induction" effectively to begin all her six generally well-planned lessons which focussed on the first half of the drama text, *Julius Caesar*. While Teacher B at School B utilised this strategy only in the first and the third lessons. This strategy was used basically to captivate the attention of the learners towards an appropriate item or aspect in order to focus, lead and develop a better understanding of the lesson proper and its major learning points.

In Lesson One, Teacher A held up two large white computer sheets (2' x 2') to represent the "blank" and innocent minds of the commoners on the streets of Rome ready to be manipulated by the political leaders. The blank sheets held up were to help the students to imagine how Brutus and Mark Antony would "paint" appropriate images and emotions to sway and manipulate the gullible populace to react according to their own respective goals. On one sheet, Brutus speaks to the masses to depict, extol and project himself as an "honourable" statesman who saves Rome from Caesar's tyranny. While on the second sheet, Antony portrays Caesar's nobility, generosity and greatness, but smears the "honourable" character of Brutus in order to inflame the masses to avenge the cold-blooded murder of Caesar by Brutus and the conspirators in the Senate. Brutus's speech to the masses appears primarily rational and he portrays his and the conspirators' killing (not an assassination) of Caesar as an honourable deed to liberate Rome from oppression.



On the other hand, Antony uses emotional appeal profoundly to incite the masses to fury to bring Brutus and the conspirators to justice for the unjust killing, or an "assassination" in the true sense, of the great Caesar.

From here, Teacher A guided the students to focus on and study the text of the speeches to extract the various opposing elements of the images and pictures drawn by Brutus and Antony in the "blank" and confused minds of the masses. The students had to write out on the blank sheets the various words which provide us with the opposing "character sketches" which are drawn by Brutus and Antony. In this first lesson, the set induction with two blank sheets was very skilfully introduced and became the core of the lesson and the students worked together and provided their responses which were then written on the board by the teacher. The teacher ended the lesson by asking them to read and review the lesson done, as their homework.

In School B, Teacher B started Lesson One by focussing the students' attention on the main characters in *Julius Caesar* - Brutus, Cassius, Caesar and Antony. The students were grouped together into three groups - each to study Act I Sc. 2 and provide evidence of "character sketches" as perceived by others. The students were then provided with foolscap sheets to write down their responses and evidence based on the text. Here, the teacher probably gave the students this topic to read up earlier, or perhaps the text was read in the previous lesson. Thus, the students moved into groups and got started on their work quietly, with only whispers among them.

In Lesson Two, Teacher A prompted the girls to share their experience of seeing a corpse with the question, "When was the last time you saw a corpse?", and four other questions urging them to respond. This topic provided considerable interest among them and a student volunteered to relate a television scene where a corpse was shown being removed

from the Highland Towers which collapsed in Ampang, Kuala Lumpur. The mention of that tragedy too provoked further animated discussions among the students. This set induction was appropriate as the lesson progressed gradually to the body of Caesar, lying on the floor after the assassination. In addition, the teacher held up a large white paper (3' x 3') with holes to represent the cloak and the dagger marks of the conspirators' daggers which penetrated Caesar's body. This set induction was again an ideal introduction to the lesson as it paved the way for the lesson on the analysis of Antony's speech over Caesar's corpse.

The teacher's use of the large white paper as the set induction was effective as it provoked the imagination of the students to visualise the effect of the daggers piercing Caesar's body and the blood rushing out to seek justice. Antony's oratorical skills too provide a profound effect as he manipulates the crowd to identify and visualise the stab wounds of Casca, Cassius and Brutus. Here too, the dramatic effect is created by Antony's emotional appeal to inflame the masses to "mutiny" and do justice. Finally, Teacher A asked the students to read up and prepare Act.3 Sc.2 and Act3 Sc.3 in order to focus on the "citizens" and compare them in both the scenes.

In School B, Teacher B started Lesson Two by asking the various groups to be prepared to present their notes and points by writing them on the board. The representative from the first group then moved to the board to write out some points on Antony (spelt with no 'h' ). The teacher wanted to start the analysis of characters with Antony, whom she claimed was the easiest to describe. Thus , the lesson proceeded with ample scope for student participation and student-centred learning. The set induction was perhaps introduced in a rather informal manner, yet it set the pace for an interesting lesson on the study of the main characters, since the students had done their preparation and analysis at home. Thus, it appeared that their home preparation was effectively conducted.

In Lesson Three, Teacher A started the lesson by grouping the students into three groups of five each in order to examine how "Leaders become powerful because they can speak (eloquently)"; about leaders who could utilise their power and eloquence to sway the masses, namely, Brutus and Antony. This situation and statement provided the students with a focus on the lesson as she explained briefly about good and bad leadership; about ordinary people or citizens who were important as well. Then, she took out two large, white computer sheets with only two scenes written at the top of each - A.1 Sc.1 and A.3 Sc. 3

The students in the respective groups were requested to analyse the lines in the scenes and describe the changes in the behaviour of the masses after they were provoked by the eloquence and manipulation by these leaders. The activity constituted :

- (i) Group One - To list down key events in A.1 Sc.1
- (ii) Group Two - To compare the type of ordinary people in A.1 Sc.1 and A.3 Sc.3
- (iii) Group Three - To list down the parallel events in A.1 Sc.1 and A.3 Sc. 3

Thus, the set induction stimulated the mood towards the lesson proper and teaching aids utilised were basically the text and two large computer sheets to jot down all the relevant points by two groups only. While the third group had to list out their points on a separate paper. The students were generally motivated to perform the activity as they had already done their reading and preparation for the task.

Teacher B started Lesson Three with the focus on "Ides of March" ( Act 1 Sc.3 - 14 March), the day that spelt fatal to Caesar. The teacher highlighted the significance of the superstitions in the text and asked the students, "Can you give me an example of a

Chinese superstition ?" A student responded , " You can't sweep the house on first, second and third day of Chinese New Year". And the teacher added, "On auspicious days, you can't sweep luck away". This constituted an effective set induction which provided a conducive mood for the strange events described in the text.

The teacher continued from where she had stopped the previous lesson and therefore the students managed to read and prepare for the current lesson. There was clear evidence that they had done some reading prior to the lesson as they were able to participate reasonably well.

In Lesson Four, Teacher A introduced the "Feast of Lupercal" as the set induction and asked , "Can you tell us what the encyclopaedia says about the Feast of Lupercal ? "

A student responded and read from her notes. In the previous lesson, the teacher ended the lesson by asking them to read Act 1 Sc. 2 and examine its structure and the Feast of Lupercal. Thus, the students knew the focus of the current lesson and were apparently prepared with some reading and relevant notes on the Lupercal feast.

A few students tended to participate rather well, however, the majority of them were noticeably quiet. The teacher seemed to manage the lesson considerably well from the set induction and carry it through with some excellent explanations. The students too seemed to follow the various stages of the lesson with general enthusiasm.

Teacher B in Lesson Four opened the lesson by focussing on the conspirators chiefly, Cassius and Casca and read from the text - Act 1 Sc. 3. The teacher read, paraphrased, explained vocabulary items and explained the plot. Some character analysis was also done to examine the extent of Cassius's determination in getting Brutus into the evil scheme. The students too followed the reading with their texts. Thus, it can be concluded that

there was no distinct notion of a set induction in this lesson. Despite some technical fault as the spotlight was not functioning, the recording was reasonably clear. There was no interruption to the lesson of any sort.

In Lesson Five, Teacher A started the lesson by asking the students to recall the events at the Feast of Lupercal in a chronological order. The teacher started with , "The Feast of Lupercal, so what happens? The race of young men, right ?" The students, however, provided some details which did not appear to be in order. Three events were noted and then the prophecy - " Beware the ides of March". From here, the lesson developed into an analysis of the events, the characters, the conspirators and the tension of the plot.

This beginning, with no formal set induction, did not hamper the learning process. The development of the lesson was effective as the events of the feast and the subsequent plot development increased the tension in this scene. There was no indication that the lesson was poorly structured. As a matter of fact , the lesson was considerably effective since the students were responsive and had some idea of the heightening of the plot.

At School B, Teacher B began Lesson Five straightaway with no set induction as she read aloud the text - Act 2 Sc.1 L.45, and the students followed. The teacher read with some dramatic fervour, explained vocabulary items, paraphrased certain lines and clarified obscure phrases. The scene read was a very crucial one which determined Brutus's participation in the conspiracy. Thus , the scene itself had ample dramatic elements which could motivate and sustain their attention. There was ample high drama in the parts read and it was certain that the students could follow the reading well. However, the students were generally quiet, attentive and "glued" to their texts.

Teacher A began her Lesson Six with some salient points on the board pertaining to Caesar's opinions of Cassius. The teacher, in fact, was in class earlier than the students for the first time, and had to wait for them to stream in. Hence, she had the time to write out Caesar's opinions on the board

- ( a ) thinks too much - great observer
- ( b ) loves no play
- ( c ) seldom smiles
- ( d ) never at heart's ease while he beholds a greater than himself.

Her opening question to them was, "What was the word that was used by Caesar in connection with Cassius ?" A student responded, "Dangerous", and was complimented for her answer. This lesson began with a different approach - with notes on the board. This lesson too was indeed captivating as most discussion focussed on Cassius, the most villainous character of the play.

Teacher B again began her Lesson 6 briskly by reading Act 2 Sc.1 L.162-190, an important scene for the conspirators as they decide on whether to kill Antony as well. This lesson too began with no apparent set induction, but the scene could sustain the attention and enthusiasm of the students as it had ample doses of drama, tension and even the romantic relationship between Brutus and his wife. Here again, despite the absence of a set induction, the lesson developed and proceeded to study and analyse the scene entirely for the benefit of the students. The lesson entailed an intensive study of the scene which was crucial to the final assassination.

Thus, since set induction was primarily introduced at the beginning of the lessons, it can be observed from the video tape recordings that Teacher A apparently used this strategy in all her classes, except in Lesson Five. She distinctly used set induction to enhance the

opening of the lessons in order to provide the students with some focus into the topic of the day. It can be regarded as an effective tool to boost the mood towards the lesson proper, especially when they had other subjects to think about prior to their Literature lesson. In Lesson Five, Teacher A conducted a follow-up activity to recollect and recall the essential aspects of the previous lesson in order to refresh their memory. This may not be a set induction in a strict sense, but since the lesson started by focussing and recalling the salient aspects of the previous lesson, it could positively be regarded as one in a general sense.

It was clear that Teacher A ended her lesson by informing her students to prepare a certain item or topic for the next. Thus, this item or topic to be prepared became the core of the set induction at the following lesson. It can be observed that Teacher A had structured her lessons well and had a good repertoire of ideas in handling the *Julius Caesar* text. It was also clear that her students were more receptive to her lessons and participated well in the activities. It was also apparent that the "threatening" eye of the camera did not create any undue inhibitions among the students. Of course there were some quiet students in the class, but they were alert to the lessons and participated in the activities keenly.

In School B, Teacher B distinctly employed the set induction in the first and the third lessons to enhance the focus of the students at the start of the lessons. However, the other four lessons did not have a clear and stimulating strategy to start the lessons. In any case, it was clear that Teacher B wanted to read the text in class for the students' benefit. This could be seen as a necessary strategy, rather than a weakness on the part of the teacher. Reading aloud for drama, poetry and literature lessons is an essential part of the literary, aesthetic and emotional experience in the learners. Widdowson (in Short,

1985, p.181) stresses on the need for teacher to expose the learners to varieties of English in order to "sensitize" them on the possible linguistic variations and their values.

Grueon (1972 ) too highlights reading and speaking as natural skills which ought to be practised for literature lessons. While Deborah T. Rosen (in Langer 1987) stresses on oral, reading and story telling skills which make literary and imaginative experiences more dramatic. Maley and Duff (1985) further highlight dramatic reading aloud in class to prompt extra reading at home. Thus, the teacher has to prompt and motivate effective reading in class so that they can read independently and confidently. Consequently, reading aloud ought to be given a paramount role in the study of drama and students too should see this as an indispensable skill. With good and dramatic reading, their imagination could "see" and "hear" the text come alive as they get absorbed into the aesthetic experience (Cadden, 1988, p.4).

Teacher B appeared to have done a considerable amount of reading in class, judging from the observations of the six lessons, perhaps because the students required motivation through such a strategy in order to obtain a fuller impact with *Julius Caesar*. It could be observed that Teacher B had generally quieter students who seemed to rely on her guidance substantially. Perhaps, they had not been given the opportunity to express themselves in an activity which provided them some scope for participation. Thus, it can be concluded that the students were probably grappling with the text at this initial stage and were generally inhibited, and so did not have the confidence to speak up or ask questions.



#### **4.2.2 TEACHING AIDS**

A close observation of the lessons and the video recordings have provided distinct evidence of the teaching aids utilised by both Teacher A and Teacher B. Both the teachers can be regarded as very experienced and knowledgeable in the teaching of Shakespeare and Literature. However, they had maintained a high level of expectation from their students in their teaching strategies which usually would be more appropriate for learners of L1 proficiency. In addition, the teachers were painstakingly analysing the text thus, allowing the students to examine the text from various aspects - the characters, attitudes, motives, political and personal conflicts, themes and actions.

In Lesson One, Teacher A introduced two blank, white computer sheets into the lesson as set induction, and these were later used by the students in groups to write their responses based on the speeches by Brutus and Antony. The groups of students were to analyse the speeches and elicit appropriate motives from their respective speeches. From the responses, suitable points were written on the board for the students to register and record as valid points to be noted for close study for the examination. Thus, the two white sheets were for the students to write their responses, after reading and analysing the text. From here, the students had to negotiate their responses among the students in the group and finally write down those that were considered logical and appropriate. Then, the teacher wrote the appropriate answers which matched the situations on the board as the final correct ones. Consequently, the teaching aids utilised were the two large white computer sheets, chalk and board and the text book with focus on the speeches.

Teacher B started her first lesson by getting the students to list out the main characters - Brutus, Cassius, Caesar and Antony. The students were told to get into groups (four to a group) and analyse Act 1 Sc.1 and Sc. 2; they were given foolscap paper to write their character analyses into a "map-like structure". She asked the students for an example and then they got started by analysing the text for details; the teacher then went round to guide and answer queries. Therefore, the primary teaching aids were chalk and board, foolscap papers, and the text to study the scenes specified.

In Lesson Two, Teacher A opened the lesson with a set induction asking the students to relate their experiences seeing a corpse. This led to the examination of the text of Antony's speech after Caesar's death - Act 3, Sc. 2, L. 160 - 223 . The teacher read the text and then held up a large white paper (3' x3' ) to represent the cloak of Caesar; she tore a few holes to signify the stab wounds of the three main conspirators - Cassius, Casca and Brutus. After reading and analysing the text, the students were asked to note the seven questions listed on another white sheet and respond with "True" or "False", based on the analysis of Antony' s speech. Thus, one large paper represented the cloak, another white sheet had seven questions and finally the text was again the focal point of the lesson. These constituted the core of the lesson and they were indeed effective.

Teacher B in Lesson Two, got the students to settle in and refer to their foolscap papers and read over their notes on the characters. She then called upon a student representative to write on the board her group responses on the character of Antony (spelt without an 'h' ), whom the teacher claimed to be the easiest. The second student wrote her group points from her foolscap paper on Brutus. Finally, the third group representative wrote out on the board her group points on all the characters involved with Caesar. The Teacher also questioned the students on certain points to get their confirmation and also gauge whether they could substantiate their choice of responses. Hence, the lesson was

conducted basically with the students referring to their foolscap sheets with the "mind maps" on the characters and their relationships. The board then was the focus of the lesson as all the responses were written and displayed for general reference, and for them to record for revision at a later date.

In Lesson 3, Teacher A prepared large computer sheets (double-sheet) for group work. The first group was to read the text and list out the key events in Act 1 Sc. 1 and focus on the commoners. The second group was told to refer to the text and compare the commoners in Act 1 Sc.1 and Act 3 Sc. 3, while the third group was asked to write out the parallel events in Act 1 Sc. 1 and Act 3 Sc. 3 with close reference to the text. There was very little use of the board as the focus was on the points and events listed on the two sheets pasted on the board. The third sheet was held up by the teacher to examine and discuss the points due to time constraints. The board was used when the teacher wrote and explained the word "pun" on it, and when she put a quotation by Emerson describing the mob -

" A mob is a lawless crowd that descends to the nature of a beast."

Thus, this lesson was predominantly conducted based on the group responses listed out onto the three large white sheets. The text too was the primary resource material, while the chalk and board was reduced to a minimum.

Teacher B in Lesson Three started the on the topic of "Ides of March" and the superstitions associated with the stormy scenes in Act 1 Sc. 1; Sc.2 and Sc. 3 based on the descriptions from the text. Some three minutes were utilised by the teacher to read the relevant part of the text pertaining to the "Ides of March", then the students were told to read that portion for another two minutes. As the lesson progressed, the teacher

introduced a reference book which was passed round, to show the students the extent of the Roman Empire outside Italy in 44 B.C. Here too, the chalk and board were used to a minimum, since a critical examination of the text was carried out.

In Lesson Four, Teacher A opened the discussion on the Feast of Lupercal by asking , "Can you tell us what the encyclopaedia says about the Feast of Lupercal ?" Then a student read from her notes based on the encyclopaedia; this led to a lively discussion on this topic which elicited various aspects relevant to the plot and characterisation. In the second part of the lesson, the teacher brought out a plastic bag of little slips of paper with quotations on them and asked each student to take one and read it. They were to read the quotation and decide whether it was attributed to Caesar or Brutus, and form two groups according to the two characters. They were not to communicate with each other, but to use their own judgement and decide which character the quotation was attributed to. Here, all textbooks were to be closed and discussion was solely based on the quotation. This too was an interesting exercise which elicited much critical thinking as they had to decide on the character referred to. Once again the whole lesson was conducted with little use of the chalk and board, but careful reference to the text. However, in the second part, lots of lively learning was centred on the slips carrying quotations as the students had to identify the source and the context without any reference to the text.

Teacher B, in Lesson Four started the lesson with a close reading of the text (Act 1, Sc. 3) and explained and paraphrased various parts for a clearer understanding of the sequence of events and the linguistic items. The text was the primary resource material and the chalk and board too were used substantially. A diagram too was drawn with a box and three-quarters of it shaded to signify that three-quarters of Brutus was won over by the conspirators. The lesson proceeded till the teacher read and dictated a summary of Act 1

Sc. 3 on winning over Brutus for the plot. This summary was for the students to write down and study the implications of this scene to the overall plot. Later, the teacher drew the ladder as a metaphor - to demonstrate the danger faced by powerful people at the top who forgot their humble beginnings at the lower rungs. The lesson primarily was a close reading of the text in order to assist the students to study and analyse the text intensively.

For Lesson Five, Teacher A began the lesson by writing "Feast of Lupercal" on the board, and asked the students to recall the sequence of events in this scene. This is a profound scene that sets the pace of the plot, and the soothsayer's prophecy set the motion for the climax. There was close examination of the text, as the students read and extracted relevant events and critically examined the characters of Caesar and Cassius. The whole lesson was so intense as the students combed the text to examine the events and the scene.

Teacher B, in Lesson Five continued with a close reading of the text (Act 2 Sc.1, L.45), where Brutus confronts the strange omens which parallels his own personal turmoil as he joins the conspirators in the assassination of Caesar. The teacher read and only wrote key words and names on the board. She mainly explained the vocabulary, did some paraphrasing, and examined the moods of the characters in the plot. Brutus is highlighted for his profound dilemma as he has only given three-quarters of himself to the conspiracy, and the teacher drew a circle and wrote "Don't" in a quarter of it to graphically explain the point. The board was marginally utilised here, while the text of *Julius Caesar* was entirely necessary.

*In the final Lesson Six, Teacher A wrote four opinions of Caesar about the suspicious character of Cassius for the students to examine and discuss their validity. She also wrote the word "dangerous" which Caesar used to describe Cassius. All the four opinions by*

Caesar were discussed and substantiated as true of Cassius's dangerous motives. In the second part of the lesson, two students were selected to represent Cassius's character and motives and they stood in front of the class as part of a role play. The rest of the students had to formulate questions and interview the two girls playing the role of "Cassius" about his evil intentions and why he hated Caesar so bitterly. Here too the text and the board were the main focal points for the lesson.

Teacher B in her final Lesson Six, again read the text ( Act 2,Sc.1, L.62) and focussed on *Brutus as he experiences a nightmare over the conspiracy*. Teacher read from the text and paraphrased, explained and interpreted the lines. She also read an old text which said that Calpurnia was the fourth wife of Caesar and his obsession to have a son was a genuine wish and it created so much more tension to the play. Another interesting point was the deep affection Brutus and Portia shared as indicated in a few lines of the text. Thus, the text and the blackboard constituted the primary teaching aids used in this lesson

**4.2.3 TASKS - LEARNER-CENTRED and TEACHER-CENTRED**

In School A, Teacher A started the lesson and introduced two large, white computer sheets as set induction. These two sheets were to represent the "blank" minds of the mob, the commoners, who were shocked at the assassination of Caesar by Brutus and the conspirators. The teacher then distributed the sheets to two groups to analyse the text and draw up a flow chart to trace the feelings aroused by the two prominent characters - Brutus and Antony. As a guide, the teacher wrote the format on the board -

- 1. creates feelings of ..... ( L. 116 - 118 )
- 2. creates feelings of ..... ( L. 119 - 120 )
- 3. creates feelings of ..... ( L. 123 - 125 )

4. creates feelings of ..... ( L. 126 - 135)

5. creates feelings of ..... ( L. 136 - 144)

The students referred to the text earnestly to elicit the responses required on the feelings aroused by Brutus and Antony in the mob. The group worked together armed with their texts, but found some difficulty. The teacher then asked a series of questions to prod them on to recall events and feelings. She also read the relevant parts of the text to pinpoint the feelings aroused, yet they found some difficulty. So the teacher went round group-by-group and assisted them. The final responses elicited for the five items above were -

feelings of remorse

feelings of anger

feelings of oneness

feelings of gaining

feelings of anger

The teacher then highlighted the moral value of the lesson that if they had " blank" minds and had no confidence, then other people would manipulate, sway and influence them, just as Brutus and Antony did to the masses who stood confused before the body of Caesar. Finally, it was quite apparent that the lesson was a learner-centred one with the teacher playing the role of a facilitator, prodding and prompting responses from them through a series of questions.

In School B, Teacher B promptly started the lesson and got the students to focus their attention on an analysis of the main characters - Brutus, Cassius, Caesar, Anthony and Casca. A "map-like" diagram was illustrated for the students to work on to follow this structure as it was practical for revision purposes. The teacher also prepared foolscap sheets of paper for the three groups (of four students each) formed to work on this learner-centred task which involved critically examining the text - (Act 1, Sc.1 and Sc. 2),

paying special attention to Scene Two. The teacher told them to analyse and identify those characters who come into contact with Brutus and mention any important features of their relationships. The students were told then to consider how the other characters viewed Brutus by saying , " It's not how Brutus sees them , but how they see him."

The teacher asked for an example and a student replied - "Brutus is easily influenced." Thus, the lesson got started after some clarification and progressed with the teacher going round assisting and answering the queries from the groups. The teacher also told them that a representative from each group would have to present the information and gave them approximately ten minutes to work at the task. However, due to time constraints, the students had to continue their analysis as homework and present them at the next class.

Teacher A, in her Lesson Two, entered the class with large white sheets of paper and started by asking the students about their experience of seeing a corpse. This effective set induction went on to a discussion on such an experience. The lesson proceeded to examine the scene where Antony cleverly uses the corpse of Caesar to manipulate the sentiments of the masses to a frenzy and seek vengeance.

The students focussed on the details in Act 3, Sc.2, with the Caesar's corpse playing a crucial part in giving substantial impact to Antony's speech. The teacher read with some dramatic gestures and then took a large white sheet of paper to represent Caesar's cloak, and tore some holes to indicate the stab wounds inflicted by the Brutus, Cassius, Casca and the other conspirators. This very profound speech did captivate the students' attention and imagination as the teacher's dramatic reading enhanced their interest and concentration as well.



Next, the teacher put up a large white sheet of paper on the board and secured it. The paper contained seven points relevant to the scene and the parts read by the teacher and the students. The students were to refer to the text and answer 'True' or 'False' against the statements. The statements which were the focus of the lesson were :

1. Antony is "man of the people" ( T / F )
2. Line 169 - he lies to them ( T / F )
3. There were other attackers besides Brutus. ( T / F )
4. When Brutus stabbed Caesar, the latter rushed out of doors. ( T / F )
5. Ingratitude killed Caesar, not so much a weapon. ( T / F )
6. " All of us fell down" means that all the Romans lost their  
freedom when Caesar was killed . ( T / F )
7. Antony is not as good an orator as Brutus. ( T / F )

During the course of the lesson, the teacher even held up a Swan edition of *Julius Caesar* in order to impress upon the students that the cover design of the text too could provide some essential ideas on the drama being studied. The teacher completed the discussions on all the points and ended the lesson by asking them to read and study the mob at the tail-end of Act 3 Sc.2 and Sc.3, and to compare them with the behaviour of the common citizens in Act 1 Sc.1. This effective close to the lesson was ideal since the students were given a clear idea on what to prepare and focus on for the next lesson.

Teacher B, began her Lesson Two by telling her students to be ready with their notes on the main characters. She then selected a group representative to begin writing her group analysis on Antony (she said the name was to be spelt without an 'h'), and she claimed that he was the easiest character to handle. The student wrote five points on Antony's relationship with Caesar to demonstrate their deep bond and trust. The second group representative wrote of Brutus's relationship with Cassius, who is a brother-in-law. Another four points were written for the benefit of all to examine and record. The teacher

also asked various questions in order to gauge and check their understanding of the points written. The third representative wrote her group points on Caesar and the details of his relationship with Antony, Cassius, Casca, Calpurnia, Marilus and Flavius. The points displayed in a "map-like" or "web-like" structure appeared to be an effective strategy since the students could link up all the essential features in a diagrammatical form.

This was indeed an effective student-centred lesson which required them to scrutinize the text and extract all necessary features of the relationships among the main characters. The teacher too played an effective role by constantly questioning and evaluating their responses to ensure their details were substantiated by evidence from the text.

In lesson Three, Teacher A commenced the class by grouping the students (five per group) in order to examine the behaviour of the masses as they become transformed into a mob. The focus of the lesson was on how political leaders used eloquence to manipulate and sway the masses to frenzy. She added that both leaders and the masses are important to the overall plot development. The three groups were assigned their respective tasks:

Group One - to examine key events in Act 1 Sc. 1;

Group Two - to compare people in Act 1 Sc.1 and Act 3 Sc.3; and

Group Three - to list down parallel events in Act 1 Sc.1 and Act 3 Sc. 3.

The teacher then gave them time to work out their responses, and she went round to guide, prompt and answer queries. Later, the students in Group One began to present their points and the teacher questioned them to gauge their grasp of other related details. The commoners of Rome too have wit and humour as a street cobbler says - "mender of bad soles"; this was then explained by the teacher as a pun on the word "soles/ souls".

Group Two then presented their points and the teacher examined them with questions to confirm the responses from the students. The teacher even quoted from the eminent Emerson - "A mob is a lawless crowd that descends to the nature of a beast", in order to describe the restless mood of the masses. Group Three could not present their points in a class, however, the teacher mentioned some recent historical events of the Tiananmen Square in China, where student mobs clashed with the military regime for more democracy. Another example of a people's power was illustrated from the example in Philippines where the masses of citizens drove out President Marcos from the Presidency.

This lesson ended with the teacher telling them to read up on the "Feast of Lupercal" to examine the structure of the scene in Act 1 Sc.2. This lesson generally was one with a learner-centred approach, with the teacher constantly questioning them to check their understanding of the details as they combed the the scenes for appropriate responses.

Teacher B, in Lesson Three, began her class by introducing the topic of the "Ides of March", the day which will be fatal for Caesar. Then the teacher asked the students to provide examples of superstitions related to the Chinese New Year. A student responded with, "You can't sweep the house on the first, second and third days of Chinese New Year."

The lesson proceeded with the teacher reading Act 1, Sc.3, L.1-80 to explain and paraphrase the lines portraying the stormy scene with strange happenings, all related to superstitions and the unstable political affairs of the state. Then, the students read silently for two minutes to go over what the teacher had explained. This too may be considered a practical strategy since the students' reading would be more beneficial to their understanding. Besides, their own reading would present certain doubts and perceptions which could be clarified on-the-spot with the teacher. However, they did not

have any questions to raise. The teacher subsequently continued her reading and then narrated the story of "Androcles and the Lion" to explain the presence of lions in city of Rome primarily for entertainment. Next, she explained that Cassius believes that Rome would be subservient to Caesar; that Romans were playing the role of women, being weaker than men and that Rome was accepting oppression under Caesar.

In addition, to illustrate the vast empire built by Caesar in 44 B.C. , the teacher displayed a reference book showing the countries of Europe stretching from Britain, France, Germany till Italy. Finally, the teacher asked them whether they would like a summary of the events in the scene, and they replied in the affirmative. Thus, she ended the lesson with a pledge to provide a summary of the scene dealt with. Here, the lesson was clearly a teacher-centred one as she did most of the reading and paraphrasing in order to provide a thorough and guided understanding of the essential aspects in the scene examined.

Teacher A in Lesson Four started with the topic on the "Feast of Lupercal" and asked the students details of this Spring Festival as explained in the encyclopaedia; so a volunteer read her notes she had prepared. The teacher then proceeded to explain the various aspects of the festival - the run by young and almost nude men; the presence of barren women standing by to be touched by the runners; it is a traditional practice based on superstition and it is regarded as a fertility cult. The teacher then linked the feast to the plot and events in Caesar's life - his dream for an heir, his ambitious nature, his full trust in Antony, and the soothsayer's prediction of the impending danger lurking on the Ides of March.

In the second part of the lesson, the teacher took out a plastic bag with slips of paper consisting of certain quotations from the text. She then invited them to take one each and read it and then decide whether the quotation was linked to Brutus or Caesar. Thus, two groups were formed and the students stood apart in the respective groups; some who

could not identify the quotation with the characters were assisted by the teacher. They were not to refer to their text for clues, and neither were they allowed to consult their friends. The groups were told to arrange the quotations in chronological order as they appeared in the text and read them. After ten minutes, the teacher called upon a student to start reading in the stipulated order. Then she explained further the quotation in relation to the plot and other related events.

All in, twelve quotations were read and examined by the students; and the teacher elaborated on their context in the play for a better understanding. The teacher also explained some key words and phrases in the lines examined, such as, "Colossus"; "pluck the feathers off Caesar"; "the fault lies in not in the stars"; and "I'm not gamesome".

It was an interesting lesson and the teacher provided some very captivating explanations for the benefit of the students. She ended the lesson by telling them to re-read all the quotations dealt with to reinforce their understanding and prepare the following part on how Cassius persuades Brutus to join in the plot. Again, the students were ideally provided the topic and part to prepare before the next lesson, an essential feature in teaching and learning.

Teacher B commenced Lesson Four with the reading of the text - Act 1 Sc.3 L.120, where Cassius persuades Brutus to join in the conspiracy; the teacher drew a box with three-quarters shaded to represent the portion of his mind that still remains to be won over by the plot. The teacher explained that Brutus's participation in the plot was very important as he would make the assassination of Caesar seem like a necessary remedy for the impending tyranny that would afflict Rome. She then wrote the names of various conspirators on the board as the students named them. Next, she listed down the events in Act 1 for the benefit of the students and they were details on - the introduction of the

characters; the character sketches; the setting in the streets, homes, and the Senate; and the fast pace of the plot. As pledged in her last lesson, she dictated and provided them a summary of the whole of Act. She also explained about a soliloquy and its dramatic effect in the scene when Brutus contemplates the plot.

The teacher continued the lesson with more explanations on Cassius's determined move to convince Brutus of the necessity of eliminating Caesar, since he would become an adder (a snake) and endanger the lives of all Romans. Then the metaphor of a ladder was introduced to demonstrate how Caesar would climb to new heights and power, and threaten all their lives since his arrogance would rear its ugly head and oppress the people. Thus, the text was examined and Cassius provides the solution to kill the "danger" in the egg, to nip it in the bud and prevent the "danger" before hatching. The teacher cited this idea from the movie "Jurassic Park", and asked them whether they had watched it in the cinema; most students answered in the affirmative. Finally, the lesson ended with Cassius's desperate need to kill "danger" (Caesar) in the egg, before it is too late for them to curtail his ambition and evil mischief. As a matter of fact, there was no mention by the teacher of what to prepare for the next class.

Teacher A opened her Lesson Five with the recall of key events at the Feast of Lupercal - Antony's run; soothsayer's prophecy of doom; Calpurnia's wait to be touched by Antony and Caesar's dramatic seizure/fit and anger finally. The teacher asked a series of questions to lead the students through the scene, and they spontaneously responded with certain possible guesses on the details. Of course, a few students were actively participating and enjoying the chain of events discussed. The crucial part of the discussion centred on Caesar's seizure and his epileptic attack after he refused the crown twice, as was later reported by Casca.

The teacher then moved on to Caesar's opinion of Cassius, "Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look". The students were asked to work in pairs and analyse the lines and provide three or four reasons why Caesar says Cassius is not safe. The students then discussed various points :

He thinks too much; such men are dangerous ;

He loves no play;

He looks quite through the deeds of men;

Seldom he smiles,

Such men as he be never at heart's ease, and

While they behold a greater than themselves.

Each of these responses was discussed to critically examine Cassius's jealousy. Finally, the teacher told the students to prepare the following questions about Cassius and Brutus as written on the board :

What Cassius seeks to tell Brutus?

What does Cassius tell Brutus about Caesar?

What is Cassius's story about Caesar?

How does Cassius persuade Brutus?

The teacher asked the students to determine whether Cassius is "dangerous" - as the word is mentioned three times. She told them to prepare an interview with Cassius; a student volunteer would play the role of Cassius. She also told them that they could put Cassius in the dock and cross-examine "him" or interview "him" like a newspaper reporter. Hence, they were told to read and prepare thoroughly.

For Lesson Five, Teacher B started reading Act 2 Sc.1, L.45, where Brutus receives a letter purportedly written by a "common citizen" (Cassius) to win his heart and join the conspirators. She read and explained vocabulary items and paraphrased certain obscure parts, such as, "Erebus", "Whet me", "monstrous visage", 'phantasma', and "Tarquin". The reading continued with Brutus gradually being won over - three-quarters of him having been won over. Brutus's agony is heightened as he is not able to sleep that night. This followed with the debate between Cassius and Brutus as to whether Antony should die with Caesar. Brutus's stand prevails and Antony is spared as he says the killing of Caesar should not be too "bloody".

The teacher added a point from Child Psychology saying that a child should not be punished in a fit of temper or anger but, with calmness of temperament. Thus, the lesson ended on this note which was full of high drama as the scene moves to the climax - the assassination of Caesar. This was indeed a teacher-centred lesson, which admittedly, was to the benefit of the students who needed proper understanding and preparation before the tragic scene of Caesar's downfall.

In the final Lesson Six, Teacher A entered the class earlier and she wrote the following points on the board :

- ( i ) thinks too much- great observer , looks through the deeds of men;
- ( ii ) loves no play;
- ( iii ) seldom smiles; and
- ( iv ) Never at heart's ease while he beholds a greater than himself.



These opinions taken from Caesar constituted the structure of the lesson and the students were to examine and understand these statements of Cassius's character and decide whether they were true. The teacher discussed each item with the students with close reference to the text and asked them several questions to prompt some reasonable responses. The word "dangerous" too was written on the board as it was attributed to Cassius. She continued the discussion of Cassius's lack of inclination towards plays, arts and music- not because he is dull, but he has an evil nature ("looks through the deeds of men"). In addition, the teacher explained that Shakespeare too advocates this view that such serious people have a tendency for "stratagems and spoils" as evidence can be obtained from other plays too.

The second part of the lesson involved the selection of two girls to play the role of Cassius; and they were asked to stand in front of the class to be prepared to answer relevant questions on his character and motives and determine if the four character traits (on the board) of Cassius are true. It was difficult beginning this activity since doubts and inhibitions prevented a spontaneous response from most of the students. However, with some promptings and questions, the task proceeded with some attempts by them to ask relevant questions. Of the two girls playing the role of Cassius, one of them was very confident and could handle questions and explanations very eloquently. This demonstrated that only a handful in the class earnestly read and knew the text with confidence.

The teacher was actively following the lesson by urging them to ask more questions and provide evidence to substantiate their comments as well. There were some moments of hesitation and gaps of silence; and the teacher urged them on. Only about five students were distinctly participating in the lesson, while the others preferred to remain silent observers. Finally, the teacher took over the lesson to provide some clarifications on

Cassius's and Caesar's character traits and referred to the board and the text to locate the evidence and guide them with some reasonable explanations. Several critical points were raised by the teacher for the students to consider :

Why Cassius sees Caesar as weak ?

Why he will not accept Caesar as the king ?

Why freedom seems to be his primary desire ?; and

Why he fabricated letters and threw them at Brutus's window ?

Finally, the lesson ended with the teacher's proposed lesson for the next class. She told the students to prepare for a quiz based on the dialogue between Cassius and Brutus and note the main points from this dialogue.

In Lesson Six, Teacher B commenced the lesson with a close reading of the debate between Brutus and Cassius as to whether Antony too should be killed along with Caesar (Act 2 Sc.1, L. 162 -190). Brutus vehemently disagrees with the idea of killing Antony, while Cassius believes that letting off Antony would prove to be fatal to the conspirators. From their arguments, the students were given a complete explanation of the situation and the relevant points. They were also given substantial guidance on the crucial scene to win Brutus once and for all. There was also a character study in this scene where Antony is considered by Brutus to be one who is "given to sports, to wildness, and much company"; therefore he would not bother to avenge the death of his powerful friend, Caesar. The students learn of Antony's care-free and fun loving nature, so he would not be too disturbed by Caesar's death. How wrong was Brutus's opinion ?

Some other points were:

- whether Caesar would attend the senate session the next day;
- the relationship between Brutus and Portia - a deep and loving relationship;

- the profound scene where Portia displays her high and honourable nature;
- teacher's related input from a reference book that Calpurnia was the fourth wife of Caesar due to his desperate desire for a male heir;
- the clock strikes - the timepiece is an incongruous item as it was not of that age;
- the strange night which portends of some events of tragic consequences; and
- the conspirators go to Caesar's house to fetch him to the Senate.

The lesson ended with Ligarius praising Brutus as the "Soul of Rome" and an "exorcist" who stimulated and boosted the former's sagging spirits. Here too, there was a clear teacher-centred lesson rather than a student-centred one, with the teacher providing all the resources and doing dramatic reading to enhance the students' appreciation and understanding.

#### 4.2.4 TYPES OF QUESTIONS

In Kissock and Iyortsuun's (1982) Preface, they stress that

Effective questioning has greater potential than any other teaching method for stimulating student thinking; but research studies indicate that the teacher questioning behaviours are not as effective or as productive as they could be. They also show that teachers ask many questions while students ask very few.

This is a typical situation in most classrooms in Malaysia, and it is no different in the observations and video recordings conducted in the two sample schools in Petaling Jaya. On viewing and analysing the twelve classroom video recordings and observations, it was clear that the teachers asked numerous questions, but the students asked very few. This is the general cultural problem in our classrooms, as students sit passively and follow the lesson. However, they just do not want to ask questions perhaps because they are inhibited, or perhaps because they do not want to draw attention on themselves, or they

do not want to reveal their ignorance or lack of knowledge or perhaps they do not want to expose their lack of reading and preparation for the lesson. Besides, in some cultures asking elders questions is regarded as rude and disrespectful.

Abbs (1969, p.3) affirms the need for "greater concern with creativity, freedom and relationship" in our secondary schools. In addition, he advocates the "growth of human qualities in children, through their understanding of Literature and the English language" . He notes in his study the following comments from certain students :

- We've been educated to shut up.
- We're used to sitting and listening, and can't do anything else.
- Teachers know their subject and it's their job to get it across to the students to pass exams.
- We're not used to speaking openly to teachers.
- We're afraid of disagreeing with the teacher.
- We're been treated like kids.

Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982, p.1) in their Introduction continue to place questioning techniques as paramount

At every stage in education questions are the core around which all communication between teacher and pupils takes place. They are a fundamental tool of teaching and lie at the very heart of developing critical thinking abilities in pupils. Because of their central role, it is important that teachers become familiar with the impact questions have on communication and learning in the classroom, and find ways to improve the use of questions by themselves and their students.

Hargie (1978, p.99) too in his article points out that the subject of teacher questions have long been of interest to educationists as he cites Corey (1940) who found that over 54 % of teacher questions required basically factual answers, while only 21% of questions

required "thoughtful answers". He also cites Gallagher's (1965) findings that 50% of teacher questions were in the "recall category ". Gallagher further added that the types of questions teachers asked would determine the degree of "creativity" or "expressiveness" available to students - and that "divergent" or "higher-order " questions provide more scope for such creativity than do "factual questions". Besides, teachers tended to concentrate on asking "recall" or "lower- order" questions. Hargie further cites Pate and Bremer (1967) who found three important purposes of teacher questions. In the study the teachers themselves revealed the purposes of questions :

- ( i ) 69 % of the them stressed the importance of checking;
- (ii ) 47 % emphasised pupils' ability to recall; and
- (iii ) 54 % stressed that questions helped to diagnose pupils' difficulties.
- (iv ) 10 % responded to the use of questions to encourage pupils to think.

Thus, it is noteworthy that questions play an integral part of a lesson especially in a Literature class where the teachers and students require this tool to enhance learning and also to clear their doubts and to seek clarifications. Also, according to the study at hand, questions seemed to feature very prominently in the twelve drama lessons observed and video recorded. In fact, the lessons recorded have demonstrated beyond doubt, the immense value of questions in general, be they lower-order or higher-order.

Brown and Wragg (1993, p.3) in their book entitled Questioning quote from Delamont (1984) who confirms that questions are paramount in the classroom in the words

Cross questioning, checking up and interrogation are rude in every day life, but the staple of classroom life.

Brown and Wragg (1993) also cite Ausubel's (1978) principle that questions are asked by teachers not to obtain new knowledge for themselves, but to find out what children

already know, and then teach them accordingly. They also provide the comprehensive list of twelve possible functions of questions tabulated by Turney et al.( 1973) :

- To arouse interest and curiosity concerning a topic.
- To focus attention on a particular issue or concept.
- To develop an active approach to learning.
- To stimulate pupils to ask questions of themselves and others.
- To structure a task in such a way that learning will be maximised.
- To diagnose specific difficulties inhibiting pupil learning.
- To communicate to the group that involvement in the lesson is expected, and that overt participation by all members of the group is valued.
- To provide an opportunity for pupils to assimilate and reflect upon information.
- To involve pupils in using an inferred cognitive operation on the assumption that this will assist in developing thinking skills.
- To develop reflection and comment by pupils on the responses of other members of the group, both pupils and teachers.
- To afford an opportunity for pupils to learn vicariously through discussion.
- To express a genuine interest in the ideas and feelings of the pupil.

With this list of twelve functions in Brown and Wragg (1993, p.4), teachers could benefit from these since they were drawn up based on the responses from teachers themselves.

Another document (Cox Report,1989) cited by Brown and Wragg indicate that there has been a recent shift in the focus and use of classroom questions as there appears to be a need to consider the purposes of questions as well as the practice of questioning to encourage pupils to talk and think.

Another study cited by Brown and Wragg focuses on the findings of Brown and Edmondson (1984) involving forty secondary school teachers who provided reasons for asking questions in class. The five main reasons provided are :

- Encouraging thought, understanding of ideas, phenomena, procedures  
and values ..... 33%
- Checking understanding, knowledge and skills ..... 30 %
- Gaining attention to task. To enable teacher to move towards teaching  
point in the hope of eliciting a specific and obscure point, as a  
warm-up activity for pupils ..... 28%
- Review, revision , recall, reinforcement of recently learnt point, reminder  
of earlier procedures ..... 23%
- Management, settling down, to stop calling out by pupils, to direct  
attention to teacher or text, to warn of precautions ..... 20 %

This list too provides a host of potential ideas worth considering before a teacher enters a class with a prepared lesson. These ideas could enhance the teaching and learning for most subjects, particularly where discussions are possible such as in Literature, Law, History, Geography, Politics and perhaps Economics.

Undoubtedly, it is necessary to appreciate and understand the reasons and purposes for teachers asking questions. In relation to this point, it would be essential to note the findings of the Leverhulme Primary Project where 1000 questions from primary classes were analysed ; it was found that only 8 % of the questions were of the "Higher Order" (cognitive) category. Among the many reasons for this phenomenon was the possibility that teachers "do not necessarily prepare such questions, but somehow expect them to arise spontaneously". ( Brown and Wragg, 1993 p.14)

Finally, it is essential to bear in mind that the types of questions are associated to cognitive (knowledge and understanding ) and affective ( pertaining to emotions) reasons and these are vital in a literature class, more so when studying a complex Shakespearean drama. A more appropriate kind of questions needed for drama study would be the convergent (narrow dimension) and divergent (broad) questions. The excessive use of convergent questions would elicit short answers and often inhibit discussion; while divergent questions virtually require students to analyse, make generalizations, infer, stimulate recall, deepen understanding and to encourage problem solving ( Brown and Wragg, 1993, p.3-14). Thus, undeniably, such "higher order" questions are absolutely necessary in a drama class, especially when it is a Shakespearean drama of such magnitude in a L2 learning environment.

O' Neill ( 91, p. 298) too concerns himself over the lack of questions in class and stresses that -

this ( asking questions ) is not an important skill for teachers because good teachers do not ask questions at all. Good teachers elicit questions from students. It is the students who need the practice, not the teacher !

He further adds that one vital aspect that helps students to learn how to ask questions is hearing these questions formulated regularly and accurately during the lesson. However, this situation of listening to teacher's questions commonly exists in most schools, but the students are usually not challenged by the teachers to formulate and ask questions, as they are in a hurry to answer them to get on with the lesson.

When analysing the question types utilised by Teacher A and Teacher B, it appeared that questions of the "recall" nature were featured prominently in the twelve lessons, since students were required to recall from the text and then explain, infer, provide



reasons and demonstrate their understanding of the events and characters of the play. Another type of questions which appeared as an essential part of the lesson were the "divergent questions", which were primarily employed to gauge their understanding of their text and the events related to the plot. There were several questions which required a "Yes / No" response, including questions which required a single response.

On the subject of classroom questions, Teacher A can be regarded as an enterprising teacher since she could conduct successful lessons guided by her repertoire of question-types in order to enhance learning among her students. Her teaching experience too is commendable as her natural flair for questioning was well utilised in structuring her lesson. In her six consecutive lessons recorded on video, the questions asked were tabulated into two categories - higher order and recall questions on the one side, and questions with single word or "Yes / No" responses on the other. Thus, the details have been presented in the following manner :

Table 4.1 : An Analysis of the Question - types used in Class A

	Total	Higher order / Recall	Single word / Yes / No responses
Lesson 1	33	17	16
Lesson 2	45	21	24
Lesson 3	35	15	20
Lesson 4	63	39	24
Lesson 5	51	35	16
Lesson 6	90 * (9)	47	43

( \* the students asked 9 questions in the student-centred activity - the interview technique used is called "hotseating" )

Teacher A distinctly conducted interesting lessons throughout as observed and recorded on the video tapes. The variety of questions too have assisted in enhancing the lesson and learning experience. As can be noted, Lesson Six had approximately 90 questions from the Teacher A and nine from the students in a learner-centred lesson which incorporated a kind of role play with "interrogation" or questioning of the character's actions and motives as described by Byron (1989,p.55) and Fleming (1994, p.95). This lesson was a unique experience as two girls volunteered to play the role of Cassius - one girl to lead and another to assist in answering the variety of questions from the class.

One essential point to mention is that both teachers repeated some questions and even rephrased in order to elicit suitable responses from them, especially when the students had expressed doubts or when they hesitated or even when they did not register the issue at hand. For example,

How does Caesar behave? / How does he act?

What's your first glimpse of him? ; or

Who brought Marcos down?

Who brought Ferdinand Marcos down?

Such repetitions seemed practical since they helped to catch the attention of the students, they helped to highlight certain issues, they helped to keep the students alert and attentive and they also urged some degree of critical thinking. Some questions appeared to urge the students to respond at a faster pace when gaps of silence prevailed. For example, the teacher used questions such as - Is that all ?; Don't you agree?; Any other questions now ?; Do you have any question ?; And what else ?

Inevitably, the types of questions posed to the students appeared challenging and they kept the students alert throughout the lessons. The students themselves showed less inhibitions generally, however, their regular reading in preparation of the lessons gave them confidence and motivation towards the study of Julius Caesar, a challenging text in the context of an L2 environment.

Teacher B, on the other hand, with her wide experience had a different set of students who were rather quiet and inhibited generally. They were observed to have asked questions very softly, perhaps because the video recordings were being conducted or perhaps they did not want to expose their inadequacies. Another observation that could be made is that the teacher conducted close reading of the text in four of the lessons, while in the first two, student-centred activities were conducted rather productively judging from the character analyses and the "maps" or "web" diagrams drawn to display the details. It was clear that Teacher B had a very heavy burden of teaching the text, perhaps because it was the first intensive reading with the students.

When analysing the questions posed by the teacher to the students, it appears clear that there is a limited range of question varieties used in the classroom. This perhaps can be explained by the nature of the lessons conducted. With intensive reading conducted in class, there appeared to be little scope for a variety of questions since the students were yet to be familiar with the text. Thus, even "recall" questions would be a challenge as they might not have digested some of the new aspects read in preparation prior to the lessons.

The following question types were observed from the video recordings :

Table 4.2 : An Analysis of the Question -types used in Class B

	Total	Higher Order / Recall	Single word / Yes/ No responses
Lesson 1	5	1	4
Lesson 2	52	18	34
Lesson 3	14	7	7
Lesson 4	10	4	6
Lesson 5	2	2	-
Lesson 6	6	2	4

Thus, from the above analysis, it appeared that the teacher conducted lessons which did not incorporate adequate questions for the students to think, reflect and recall as these were essential in a literature class. However, it must be conceded that the bulk of the reading done in class probably reduced the incidence of questions. One vital fact was that in Lesson 2, where the students prepared their character analyses, there seemed to have been a commendable effort with the range of question types posed to them. It also appeared clear that there was a limited use of "higher order" and "recall" questions which were more challenging. Finally, perhaps, the use of questions with "Yes/ No" and "single word" responses was necessary in order to consolidate their understanding of the text, before they could infer, discuss, explain or even evaluate events.

**4.2.5 TEACHER PERSONALITY**

Some authorities have emphasised the prominent role of the teacher in a drama class and Linnell (1982) in her Introduction has noted that teaching drama is probably the most

challenging and difficult of subjects any teacher could undertake. In addition, Protherough (1986, p.75) cites Alan England who stresses that

the teacher's aim is not primarily to teach theatrical skills so much as to use the the activities to illuminate an experience.

Another, practitioner in the trade, Samarawickrama (1979, p.67) too highlights the value of the teacher and drama in language learning in his article in the following words

it has become increasingly clear that the use of drama can aid a teacher to make language classes interesting and enjoyable. Through drama he/ she can help students practice language skills and persuade them to see a language as a living entity throbbing with vitality.

Thus, it must be appreciated that the teacher's effort is paramount in the study of Drama and Literature especially where the English language is thriving in an L2 environment and where the reading culture is not an encouraging phenomenon.

In the two classes observed and recorded, both teachers were very experienced and demonstrated considerable skills in handling *Julius Caesar* in their respective classes. However, their personality traits showed some significant difference, and those features also helped to determine a difference in their craft and teaching skills. Teacher A certainly possessed a strong and commanding voice which helped to create a positive impact in the classroom; the confidence and enthusiasm emanating from her personality provided much stimulation among her students. Her rapport with her students too, was positive and conducive to a learning environment.

Probably the most significant feature was her interesting and captivating literature and drama lessons which her students would vouch for, including her references to current examples to put life into the human situations and events portrayed in the text.

Teacher B, on the other hand, had a different set of students who depended on her expertise entirely. Her experience and teaching skills were undoubtedly immense, but the limitation was that they could not be gauged merely from a few video recordings and the observations. Perhaps, it was the first reading of the text with the students, or perhaps they wanted her to give them a thorough class reading, before they embarked on their own private or study group reading. Maley (1985) and Carol Giles (1989) clearly stress the merits of classroom reading since doubts, questions, comments and reactions can be shared in class or in groups and clarified and not relegated to the home. Thus, the teacher's efforts in conducting intensive reading in class and providing comprehensive explanations and clarifications can be considered a heavy burden on the teacher. However, if the students were asked to read and take responsibility in their individual reading tasks, substantial class time can be devoted to consolidation exercises in order to participate in more learner-centred activities to reinforce the numerous aspects involved in drama study.

Another essential aspect among Teacher B's personality traits is that she lacked impact in the area of dramatic reading and she generally did not emanate a strong impression in her enthusiasm and zest in class. The students too were extremely quiet and did not ask questions confidently or with reasonable zeal as all the questions and responses could not be heard in the video recording. However, the teacher's rapport with the students could be considered generally rather formal and distanced, yet casual at certain occasions especially during group work when students took the opportunity to clear their doubts in the privacy of their groups.

When commenting on both the teachers, it was clear that their questions were not assigned to specific students to answer. They merely threw the questions to the class as a whole. It was apparent that the teachers only knew a few students by their names, while

they probably were not familiar with all their names, perhaps because the teachers had started lessons only two weeks earlier after the long six-week vacation in October and November of that year. It would have been more practical and effective in teaching, if questions were directed to specific students. This way all the students would have to be alert and conscientious in their reading and understanding in order to be more prepared for questions directed at them. Thus, the students too would have taken it upon themselves to read earnestly and avoid unpleasant surprises if they were caught for not being able to answer well. Thus, teacher A told her class to prepare for all the lessons, however, Teacher B told her class to prepare and read specific topics on only two occasions, while at the other four lessons, the teacher merely ended the lessons with the topic at hand, with no mention of reading as homework.

It can be noted here that the two set of students and their respective teachers showed a variety of classroom teaching and learning aspects which have made this study a challenging feat indeed.

#### **4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

After the six observations and video recordings conducted in each class from the two schools, a set of ten questions were posed to the students to gauge their perceptions on their learning, their teachers' roles in understanding the text, their grasp of the themes and character sketches. The students were also asked to reveal their problems pertaining to the study and understanding of *Julius Caesar*. The teachers too were asked to respond to another questionnaire with fifteen items to study their responses pertaining to their efforts in preparing the students for the Drama component in the final examination.

The students' questionnaires were handed over to the teachers to administer at their convenience, since the duration of the study in the two schools had already taken two and a half weeks, and therefore, it was decided that another lesson would not be interrupted solely for answering the questions. Also, the questions required some comments and elaboration of the students' responses in writing; this strategy to obtain written responses was solely to gauge the students' writing abilities and fluency in the English language. Of the total of 35 questionnaires distributed, only 24 students returned them with their responses, and it was difficult to keep going back to the schools to retrieve the remaining ones. Thus, School A had eleven respondents, while School B had thirteen, to enable a fair survey of the general perceptions of the students on their study of *Julius Caesar*.

In School A, there were eleven respondents out of sixteen, and clearly seven of them wrote fairly well on their responses to the questionnaire. All of them were unanimous in their dependence and reliance on the teacher for guidance and teaching *Julius Caesar*, and they maintained that the teaching strategies utilised - reading aloud; dramatic reading; paraphrasing; explaining; character sketching and role playing were all vital in their learning and understanding of the play. Only two students responded that the teacher was reading too much and this was "boring" to follow. Most of them were satisfied and motivated by the teaching style and questioning technique adopted by the teacher in class, as they usually read and prepared before the class. Most of them mentioned that the class reading and the line-by-line explanation, including the handling of all vocabulary items, were a vital part of their motivation to study the text. They all found the language in *Julius Caesar* very difficult, but only the teacher had helped them to cope with their own reading and appreciation of the text.

They were unanimous in that the viewing the movie *Julius Caesar* on video enhanced their overall understanding and motivated them to read on. However, they wanted more



video presentations in order to learn the play completely since, they could understand the characters better through this medium which gave them details of facial expressions which matched the lines spoken. This reason for the video version of the play certainly seemed plausible since, the study of characterisation would be enhanced through a movie which would portray the characters vividly, rather than let the imagination grope for details on characters by the slow, yet effective process of reading. A student mentioned that the study of some character traits revealed our own inherent similarities, which proves that the characters in the play were not as "alien" as some might have considered. Another student even wrote that Caesar was dead, yet she felt his spirit come alive in her reading experience!

In School B, only thirteen out of nineteen questionnaires were received by the teacher with their responses and they too mentioned that the teacher was instrumental in their reading, understanding and the gradual appreciation of the play, *Julius Caesar*. In their responses, they expressed their dependence on the teacher's guidance, summaries, character sketches, mind-maps or web diagrams of the details of each character and the teacher's dramatic reading, which were crucial in their understanding and appreciation of the play. In addition, the teacher's sketches, drawings, paraphrasing and line-by-line explanations, including vocabulary study were revealed as pertinent to their proper study. Only two students mentioned that more variety could be added such as more opportunity should be given for acting out the play and role playing. They revealed that Shakespeare's old English was indeed difficult, yet they enjoyed the text because the teacher assisted them in explaining clearly all their difficulties.

Most of the respondents did not venture to recommend other teaching strategies, since they appeared very confident and secure with the teacher's regular methods. However, they were generally motivated after watching the video tape on *Julius Caesar*, which

helped to enhance their understanding of the play even more, since they could imagine and focus better on the scenes, the political conflicts and the themes. One student even liked the teacher's use of the blackboard as it was a good "teaching utensil"! Another student mentioned that she enjoyed acting out the play, since they rehearsed the assassination scene, and she watched how the "other conspirators killed Caesar in the school hall !" Finally, there was no doubt about the paramount role of the teacher in the study of *Julius Caesar* or any other text in the Literature syllabus. The main consideration was that they were not competent enough to handle the Shakespeare text without the dedicated teacher to guide them through.

Another aspect of their responses touched on their reading and preparation which were primarily guided by the teacher. Most of the respondents appreciated the reading technique demonstrated by the teacher, that is, reading aloud and memorising certain key words attributed to the characters. Thus, they also were motivated to read by the universal themes in the play. Most of the students could mention four to six themes which they had registered from the play. Among both the groups of students, they were familiar with the themes as they claimed that even in our current society those themes were still applicable, especially during national elections when political leaders became jealous, powerful, greedy, ambitious and even planned conspiracies. Here again, it was clear that the teachers had given them ample examples of political rivalry, such as, that which brought the downfall of President Ferdinand Marcos of Philippines, the student revolt at Tienanmen in China and the necessary destruction of the dinosaur egg, the potential danger (as Caesar could become), featured in the movie, *Jurassic Park*.

Finally, in considering *Julius Caesar* as a drama text, they were unanimous in their responses that the play was very difficult to read, too flowery, English being old and outdated. Some admitted that they had no other play to choose from, so they struggled

through with the sole assistance from the teacher, since she answered all their doubts and queries. A few students revealed that it was too "political" in its themes and could not appreciate its value. They would have preferred a comedy or a romantic play which would have captivated their interest more. However, some students felt that once they read, studied and understood the play, the enjoyment they derived from it outweighed their difficulties and complaints about the *Julius Caesar* text.

In the next aspect on the relevance of the themes to their lives, the students from both schools felt rather comfortable with the portrayal of themes and the depiction of the characters in the play. They were able to write as many as five themes - power, greed, revenge, ambition, and jealousy. The other related themes mentioned were loyalty, patriotism, political conspiracy, friendship and moral values. They appeared to think of general elections as a way to connect the themes to their present lives, especially when ambitious political candidates contested for power out of greed, ambition and jealousy. They also understood the implications of the theme of revenge, including conflicts, as it was common in the society today especially when killings occurred due to revenge and political rivalry and conspiracy. The students mentioned that most of the themes were well-discussed in their respective classes by their teachers and they could perceive their relevance to their lives. A student even found that some of the themes expressed essential moral values which were important to current everyday life.

Finally, it was clear that when they understood the themes and the characters, their appreciation of *Julius Caesar* was enhanced substantially. At this juncture, it would be appropriate to mention a comment by Prof. Koh Tai Ann (1995, RELC p.16), who at the Singapore Regional Language Centre said that since ample time was spent by teachers in coaching their Literature students, Shakespeare was still their best choice and they scored highest in it. Thus, it can be stated that *Julius Caesar* too could be the most popular text

and the students' best choice in the examination, if they put ample time and effort into its study.

#### 4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The teachers too had provided invaluable information and contributed a great deal to this limited study by consenting to six classroom observations and video recordings of the *Julius Caesar* lessons from 16 December 1993 till 3 January 1994. In addition, they had also completed a questionnaire which was to gauge the general structure of their lessons, their teaching techniques and to determine how they were teaching and assisting the students in preparation for the October 1994 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination in Literature in English, in particular the drama questions on *Julius Caesar*.

With the teachers' questionnaires in hand, it was convenient to gain some insight into their perceptions on the teaching and learning of the genre, drama, and in particular, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. With the responses from the teachers, several aspects were analysed such as teaching techniques and strategies, student learning and reading and certain problems related to the teaching of the text.

Both Teacher A and teacher B were aware of the challenges confronting them in teaching Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and opted to teach this text and not J.B. Priestley's *Inspector Calls* for the drama component. Thus, it seemed clear that their experience and strong foundation in the Shakespeare tradition prompted them to initiate their students into the "finest works" of English literature. Both the teachers were confident and enthusiastic with their challenges despite the fact that their students were not as competent as those who studied the same play a decade or two earlier. Thus, with the students' limitations borne in mind, they taught with more fervour and purpose, since the

students' failure rate might reduce the number of candidates the following year due to an aversion for Literature as it results in poor grades.

Teacher A focussed her six lessons on character study, characterizations, conflicts between characters and relationships; Teacher B too covered these aspects as well as the themes and plot development. They felt that this was an essential strategy to get the students "hooked" onto the reading which was vital to their understanding and appreciation of the play as a whole. The critical study of the plot development too had some very captivating aspects which caught the students' attention rather well. Hence, the aspect of personal reading, group reading or teacher's dramatic reading were all vital in enhancing the experience and imagination of the students. Teacher A even recommended the "Shakespeare Made Easy" series for the weaker students in her class in order for them to read and appreciate the play based on the completely paraphrased version. From here they would then be initiated into the prescribed text to read the actual play and gain the full impact of the classic work. Both teachers assisted their students with preliminary guidance into Shakespeare's language before they started on the text. This way, the students could be "sensitized" positively and then be motivated and stimulated to read independently and move towards self-study.

Both the teachers preferred similar strategies especially in conducting classroom reading and dramatic reading to stimulate their students to follow the text earnestly in class and then do their own reading at home or with friends. Consequently, they could clarify all their doubts and queries, since the teacher explained, paraphrased, discussed character traits, clarified plot development and handled vocabulary items during the course of the classroom reading. Thus, the students might not need to ask any questions, since in time all doubts would be clarified. The positive participation of the students in class and in groups appeared to demonstrate their keen interest in the text. Once the language barrier

was broken, they "springboard" into a more independent phase in their reading and studying of the text, according to Teacher B.

Both teachers responded that the themes and values were relatively easy to grasp, since they were even applicable in our modern world at present. The themes were still current and had implications for our lives as well. It was certain that the teachers had made the themes and values concrete in their minds, and the reality of the themes further enhanced their enthusiasm towards the text. The students even appreciated the current and practical examples which constituted the essence of the themes and human values. In fact, the themes and character study were examined together since both these aspects were intertwined and made the plot development rather structured and coherent.

Thus, both the teachers employed different tasks and strategies in order to analyse the characters and events. Teacher A adopted a learner-centred group task to analyse characters and then to demonstrate their understanding with a "True / False" answer.

In the aspect of teaching strategies and techniques, both the teachers used direct explanations and discussions of the major events and speeches as their instruction method, despite the fact that it might seem like "spoon-feeding". However, considering the time constraints and the other genres to be taught, they had indeed determined the best mode of instruction to suit their respective students' needs. Teacher A responded that she utilised student-centred tasks and group work in order to handle certain more complex scenes and characters. This way, the students could totally devote their attention to that task and topic; for example, the Feast of Lupercal which constituted more than one lesson. While Teacher B initiated a group exercise to do character sketches - first a group discussion to sketch "mind-maps" or "web diagrams" and then to graphically display the whole structure on characters and their relationships. This was Teacher B's strategy as she felt that the students were more inclined to communicate in their groups, rather than

to the whole class. In addition, she resorted to giving summaries at the end of every scene as the students preferred to have such notes as they were convenient for revision purposes. Also her Science-stream students preferred "map" or "web" diagrams which provided practical guides for quick reference and reading.

Teacher A preferred to use student-centred teaching strategies especially when analysing important scenes, events and plot development. This was also primarily to break from the routine of class reading and allow students to explore and scrutinise the text on their own preferably. This was accompanied by a barrage of questions, which was characteristic of Teacher A's strategy. According to Teacher A, a study and analysis of essential quotations done in groups also proved to be successful among the students as they generally preferred some challenging activities in the cognitive domain. They appeared more confident and less inhibited when performing tasks in groups, for example, Teacher A conducted two lessons where the students had to comb the text for evidence to substantiate their responses. One interesting lesson constituted analysing quotations from various characters, arranging them in chronological order and explaining their connections to the plot; the second task was having two students to play the role of Cassius, and to answer questions from the class on his character, motives, dreams and schemes. These too were student-centred tasks, yet challenging for students as they were compelled to read the text closely for accurate evidence.

From the aspect of problems and difficulties confronting students, both teachers were very approachable, pleasant and were constantly assisting their students to understand the text, the language of Shakespeare, certain obscure allusions and some cultural elements. In fact, their line-by-line reading, paraphrasing, group work, learner-centred activities and the spate of questions posed, certainly appeared to enhance students' grasp and understanding of Julius Caesar. However, it was clear that the students were not

generally attempting to ask any questions, perhaps due to their inhibitions. Both the teachers were very concerned about asking a variety of questions to gauge their students' knowledge and the extent of their close reading. In addition, both the teachers responded that certain learner-centred activities were solely introduced to break away from the routine, in order to stimulate their learning and to interact in groups to clarify their doubts and difficulties.

Since the recordings and the observations were conducted in the early part of the Form Five academic year, both the teachers responded that there was ample time to prepare and revise for the class tests, Mid-Year, Trial and the final S.P.M. examinations. They also responded that it was the initial stage of difficulty as they were still groping and challenged by the text. However, when the writing tasks would be introduced later, the teachers would have a better assessment of the students' difficulties and remedy the problems. Finally, both the teachers mentioned that the video tape on *Julius Caesar* would be watched whenever the need arose as this seemed to assist the students to imagine and visualise some of the difficult scenes, characters and their moods mainly through the film and electronic media. Teacher B admitted that Shakespeare was indeed difficult for her Science-stream students who had a "mediocre level of proficiency in English".

However, they showed considerable interest in their readings and activities so far, and more activities would be introduced gradually as their understanding of *Julius Caesar* was enhanced. In fact, they admitted that it was difficult for the students even to emotionally interact with the text and characters at this preliminary stage, since they were still getting familiar with the plot, themes and events. They were yet to get fully "hooked" onto these elements in the text, but eventually they would as they got more acquainted with the *Julius Caesar* text and the compelling characters and plots.